

N^o 17
The Order of Duties.

A
S E R M O N,

Preach'd at the PARISH-CHURCH of
St. *L A U R E N C E* in
R E A D I N G,

IN THE
County of *B E R K S*,

On *Tuesday* October 31st, 1727,

Containing some Animadversions on an Assize-Sermon, lately
Publish'd, & Preach'd at *Abingdon* July 18th, 1727. by *FRANCIS*
FOX, M. A. Vicar of *St. Mary's* in *Reading*, and Preben-
dary of *Salisbury*,

To which are Prefix'd some Letters, that pass'd between the Au-
thors of That, and the Following Sermon)

By *JOSEPH SLADE*, M. A. Lecturer of the aforesaid Church
of *St. Laurence*.

R E A D I N G. *Ⓢ*

Printed by *WILLIAM AYRES*, in *Minster-Street*, and Sold by
BENJAMIN SHIRLEY, Bookseller, in *Reading*.



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To the CLERGY, GENTLEMEN, and other INHABITANTS of the Borough of READING in the County of BERKS.

GENTLEMEN,



THE Migbty Powers of *Avarice and Ambition* were never more discernible than at present. They now appear in a most monstrous Corruption of Faith and Manners, in great Numbers of Wild, Extravagant, and Heterodox Opinions, and in Bribery, Perjury, and a long Train of horrid Practices, abominated even by Them, that know not God.

For what End such a Multitude of Heresies should be permitted by God in His Church, and Such Trying Times shou'd come, St Paul long ago told his Corinthians, viz. that They, which are approved, may be made manifest that is, that the Sound and Orthodox Members of Christ's Body may be distinguish'd from Those, that are Corrupt, and Hypocritical: Or to see Who will steadily adhere to Afflicted Virtue, and Who bow down to Triumphant Iniquity.

That the Duties of Morality shou'd be Preach'd, and earnestly Inculcated, in Times, when they are little Practic'd, is fit and necessary: But that they shou'd be set forth as the Highest Duties of Christians, be plac'd above Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and made of greater Necessity than Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and especially too, when there is, evidently, a great Apostacy from this Faith, and when these Sacraments are too little regarded, I can see no reason. What the Design of advancing Morality to this great Height has been of late, I will not Presume to say; but what the Natural Tendency of it is, I Dare to say; and That is a Lessening our Esteem of Christian Institutions, and consequently of the Christian Religion.

I doubt not, but You wish with Me, that all Those Gentlemen, who have rais'd Morality to so high a Pitch, were the same in Practice, as they are in Theory, th it is, would Practice Moral Duties as much above Others, as they Preach them. If they do not, they must expect, in a censorious World, to be reputed Hypocrites, not only in Christianity, but even Morality too.

What Reason there was for the following Composition, It Self, I doubt not, will sufficiently shew to All, that have any regard to Truth, and that are not utterly lost in Party: That it is owing to Private Pique, or Personal Prejudice,

and not to a Concern for the Great Duties of our Religion, and the Good of Souls, is an Uncharitable Surmise, and void of Truth. For I profess my self ready to do any good Office to the Person I have oppos'd, notwithstanding the ill Treatment I have receiv'd from him, my Enmity being not to his Person, but his Doctrine.

I am very sensible of the Mischievous Consequences of Clergy-men's Preaching against one another, and can truly say, that till the Sermon, I have animadverted upon, appear'd in Print, I never intended to Preach directly against it: But when I saw it Publish'd, (notwithstanding the great Offence it generally gave, when it was first Preach'd at our Lecture) and without any Other Alteration than the Addition of a few Lines, at the Beginning. and End of it, to suit it to the Business of an Affize, I then no longer thought my self bound to Silence, but Oblig'd from the following Letters, that had pass'd between us, as well as from Other Considerations, to give Testimony against several Doctrines contain'd in it. Which Letters shou'd never have seen the Light, had not Many boasted, and our Author himself publickly affirm'd even to my very face, that I had refus'd the Debate he had propos'd.

As I have been above 20 Years a Preacher amongst You, and have Particular Obligations to not a Few of You; and as This Sermon was Preach'd in Your Town, and is now Publish'd at the earnest Desire of Many of You, I cou'd not omit this Opportunity of Publick'y acknowledging my self, as I now do,

Your much Oblig'd, and very Affectionate
Humble Servant,

JOSEPH SLADE.

The LETTERS.

To the Revd. Mr. Slade.

Sir,

Reading April 10.

If you had had any thing to object against my Sermon at the Lecture, it would have been more agreeable to your Character and mine to have written or spoke to me, that by your Censures on it to have been the Occasion of so much Discourse about the Town; especially since you had so good an Opportunity after the Lecture when so many of the Clergy were together. You have indeed made the Study of Divinity your Profession about 20 years; but I hope I am not accountable for it, if my Sermon did contain what you had not heard before. If it be agreeable to the holy Scriptures, to the Doctrine of our excellent Church, and to the Sentiments of some of our best Divines, I am satisfied. And this I doubt not to make appear. You should have considered the ill Effect, which Prejudice has upon Men's Minds; how it hinders them from receiving and practising the plainest, and most necessary Truths and Duties. I can easily overlook any Censures passed on my self; but it Sensibly touches me, when I reflect, how many of those, whose Souls by the Laws of God, and the Laws of the Church are committed to my care, may be hindered from attending to what is of everlasting concernment to them by such Censures. Need I put you in mind that our Church mentions together the Hinderer, and Slanderer of God's Word, and enjoins Repentance to the former as well as the latter?

I am not conscious that I have done any thing that can justly give offence to you, or anyone else. But why do I mention this? For no consideration, no, not even a Supposition of my having advanc'd unsound Doctrine can justify your proceedings. For a Clergyman to go about Whispering among the Laity against his Brother — But enough of this. Is this the way to maintain the Dignity of our Character? What treatment can we expect from the Laity, when Clergymen deal thus with each other? If I had turn'd my back upon the Holy Sacrament, as you did at St. Maries the Sunday you dined with Mr. Fellows,

lowt. you might with some Colour have affirmed that I had no great Opinion of the Duty of Christians in that respect. If the Primitive Church judg'd Laymen worthy of Excommunication for such a Neglect, I believe they would not have been very favourable to a Clergyman, who was present at the Prayers, and Sermon, but withdrew from the Holy Table.

Sir, upon a serious Review of my Sermon, I am so far from wishing any thing unsaid, that I am content to preach it before any of my Superiours. In few Words therefore, I am ready to produce it before any Number of Persons to be chosen by you and me. And I call upon you to make out your Objections against it. If you can convince me of Error, I am ready to retract it. If you cannot I expect you should make me such Reparation for the Censures you have so liberally thrown about, as equal Judges shall determine. And if you shall refuse this, I shall think my self oblig'd, by the regard, which every Clergyman ought to have for the Success of his Ministry, and the good of Sou's, to do my self Justice, and to appeal to the whole Town. I shall wait 3 or 4 days for an answer. I am, Sir, Your hearty well-wisher

F. IOX.

Mr. S. labouring under so violent an Indisposition in his Throat, as to be depriv'd of Speech, when the foregoing Letter came to his hands, after he had perus'd it, wrote for the Bearer of it, as follows,

Tell Mr. Fox, that I will give an Answer to his Letter the next time I meet him at the Lecture; that I have no Ends to serve in Writing, perhaps he may, for which reason I shall not gratify him.

Wherefore on Tuesday April the 18. being but 4 days beyond the Time limited for an Answer, Mr. S. sent the following Note.

To the Revd. Mr. Fox.

Sir,

IN your late Letter to me you allow it a proper time for Objections to be made to your Sermon, after Lecture, before the Clergy.

This then is to acquaint you, that I design, God willing, to be at the Lecture to day; that I shall be ready to give an Answer to your Letter before our Brethren; that I desire your Sermon may be produc'd; and that I expect Satisfaction for the Injury you have done me.

Tuesday April 18.

JOSEPH SLADE.

About

About one hour after came what follows.

To the Revd. Mr. Slade.

Sir,

April 18. 1727.

I intended to have been at the Lecture to day, but upon the receipt of yours I alter'd my Design. For I have no Opinion of the benefit of such verbal conferences as you propose. What I said in my Letter was, that it wou'd have been more agreeable to your Character and mine, if instead of censuring my Sermon before the Laity you had objected against it before the Clergy.

Such a Conference will not remove the Offence that has been given; and therefore can be of no use.

F. FOX.

Mr. S. having waited some time for an Opportunity of meeting, and debating with Mr. Fox, but found none, afterwards sent the following Letter.

To the Revd. Mr. Fox.

Revd. Sir,

SINCE you have declin'd a Conference before our Brethren, when call'd to it, tho' what before you seem'd to approve of, you have forc'd me upon a Method of Defence, which, at first, I did not design to have gone into.

I little expected ever to have found Mr. Fox acting the Part he has done, a Part, I'm sure, highly unbecoming any Clergy-man, that has the least regard to Character. Boldly to charge a Brother with what you think Criminal, and afterwards to go about Pumping for Evidence, is what I am almost asham'd to mention even to Your Self. What can justify such a Conduct? You have represented me as a Whisperer of Scandal, and Hinderer of God's Word, a heavy Charge! and which, sure, no Man of common Prudence wou'd do without being well able to Prove it. This I take for a very high Injury, and Affront, for which I expect Satisfaction, which is, that you will either produce your Evidence to make good your Charge, or else acknowledge what you have written to be only the Product of your own Jealousy, and a Fiction of your own. Sure I am, that I never but twice spoke of your Sermon before the Laity: Once I was desir'd to give a just Account of it, because they said they had heard a great deal of it, but could not depend upon the Truth of it. In compliance with Their Request I gave as just Account of it as I could, leaving Them to judge of

of it: The other time, to the best of my Remembrance, I began not the Discourse, nor do I remember what I said of it: Now This, I dare say, is more than you can prove against me, and This is All that can be prov'd; and whether This be sufficient for you to give a Clergyman the Character of a Whisperer against his Brother, as if I had made it my business to go about censuring your Sermon before the Laity, I leave to any one's judgment; And, if you have branded me with an Odious and Filthy Character, but without foundation, I appeal to all the World, whether you are not justly to be stigmatiz'd with a Character more odious, which is a false Accuser of your Brethren. But why did you make choice of the Term Whispering? Do you think I was afraid to speak out? I assure you, I never had that terrible Notion of you as not to dare to speak the Truth even to your Face. And why do you impute all the Noise about your Sermon to Me, or to my Censures of it? Were I apt to be elated by such things, this wou'd exalt me, I fear, a little too far, to find almost the whole Town of Reading putting so much Confidence in my Judgment, and Integrity, as presently to conclude a Doctrine not right, because not consonant to my Opinion, and tho too it came from the learned Mr. Fox. Can you really want to be told, that your Sermon gave Offence almost to every one that heard it, Laity as well as Clergy, and that every one was censuring of it as soon as he came out of Church? And yet was All owing to Me?

As to my not being at the Sacrament, when I din'd with Mr. Fellows, I shall only say, that a discreet and modest Clergy-man wou'd not presently have condemn'd a Brother Clergyman for it without ever hearing what he had to say in his own Defence. As I have been a Clergy-man almost as long as you, you might in Humility have imagin'd, that I almost understood my Duty as well as you, and that I wou'd not have done as I did, without Reason. I wish Your permitting your Work-men to work upon your House on Good-Friday had given no more Offence to Christians than my not being at the Sacrament, when I was casually at your Church: That Permission of Your's has been deem'd to shew little regard to the Author of our Salvation, and has given Offence almost to every Christian: Whereas what I did has given Offence to no one, that I have heard of, beside your Self.

If You are a Spy upon the Actions of your Brethren, and will not fail of exposing them, when You think You have Opportunity, Pharisee, and Puritan like, raising your own Character upon the Ruins of Theirs, You must give us leave to look to your Foot, and to observe whether all Your Actions be agreeable to strict Piety, or to your Christian Profession.

I have been inform'd, that you have said, that I have invited, or at least encourag'd some of your Parish not to go to their Parish-Church. If you have said it, it is of a piece with my going about Whispering, having no Existence but in your own head, because I have never done anything like it, but the direct Contrary. If Persons, that are sincere in their Christian Profession, and

that have an high Value, and Esteem for our most excellent Establish'd Church, can find no difference made between This Church and a Schismatical Conventicle, by One, who eats of her Bread, and whose Office it is to Reprove, and Rebuke every Error, and Sin, and therefore Schism; and to Exhort to every Duty, and therefore to Conformity, or Obedience to Those that are over them in the Lord; but do find Both plac'd upon an equall foot, by being told, that it will not be enquir'd at the last day of what Sect or Party they have been of, it is no Wonder, it is Nature, and therefore You must not be Surpris'd, to see Your Flock start aside, and stare at you; and therefore You must not impute your Flock's forsaking you to any one but Your Self.

What you mean by appealing to the whole Town I know not, unless it be Printing Your Sermon. If so, I hope You'll make some Alterations, before it be Printed, and be so just as to acknowlege them. I am,

Sir,

Your Injur'd Brother

JOS. SLADE

May 1. 1727.

By way of Answer to the foregoing was sent what follows.

To the Revd. Mr. Slade.

Sir,

May 1. 1727:

I wou'd not have you elated with the Thoughts of any Apprehensions I have of your Power, or Influence in the Town; there being no Foundation for them. I am the Injur'd Person; but I will not be drawn into an Epistolary Correspondence with you. I have better Employment than answering such Unmannerly Letters. If therefore you refuse the proposed Satisfaction, you shall receive no more Letters from me, write or do what you will. But whatever Method I take, you shall not hear of my Preaching against you, or of my putting any other upon it. You say the Clergy were offended at my Sermon, if so, they are Parties, and not proper to be made Referees. But why did they not express their dislike at that time, when any misunderstandings might have been easily set right betwixt our selves?

If I had fail'd in any point of Duty required by our Church, or assum'd an Authority to introduce new Ceremonies, which the Church has not only not commanded, but most expressly forbidden any to introduce or use under very great Penalties, something might have been objected, but if none of these things can be laid to my Charge, Judge you to whom the Character of an Accuser of the Brethren belongs.

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As to my Sermon I know it to be agreeable to the Gospel of Christ, and the Doctrine taught therein of great importance to Men's everlasting Interest. If therefore any were offended, the offence was taken, not given. But this was more then I ever heard, till I was inform'd that Mr. Slade had objected against it to some of the Laity. Some even then highly approv'd of it, and as good Judges as Mr. Slade, or any of his Advisers or Assistants have thank'd me for it.

I have known and heard of several good Churchmen offended and made uneasy by Sermons against the Dissenters, but I never heard of one Dissenter convinced by such Sermons. They inspire bitter Zeal and destroy that mutual Love which is so necessary to heal our unhappy Divisions. Whatever therefore a few humor-some People may do, who, it is plain, do not understand their own Principles, I shall pursue the same Measures to promote the Interest of the Souls committed to my care, till I can discover some more agreeable to the Doctrine of our Church.

I heartily pity a man, who can act and write as you do. Your Letter is a Demonstration of what Spirit you are of. I pray God forgive you. Farewell.

F. FOX.

To the Revd. Mr. Fox.

Revd. Sir,

THAT you may now imagine, that I write (as I verily think you did) without an Adviser or Assistant; I send you This without giving my self time to consult any of my Friends.

Since you have sent me a Letter only, and not an Answer, after I had insisted upon your producing your Evidence to make good your Charge against me, or else acknowledgeing the Charge to be a Fiction of your own, you must give me leave to guess at the Reason of this your Conduct, which is, that you have no Evidence to produce.

The Reason also of your Writing no more is, I think, very evident; You have wrongfully accus'd me, and have nothing to say in your Defence. But notwithstanding this, I must, and do, insist still upon Evidence; and I challenge you to bring any one Person to witness, that I ever censur'd your Sermon before the Laity. If you cannot see the Unreasonableness, and Folly of putting me upon Defence of what I said of your Sermon, without first letting me know what it was I said, I pity your want of Sight: After you have let me into the Censure, and have told me, Who the Persons are, you shall make choice of for bearing the Debate, whether Clergy or Laity, Males or Females, I will then, if I think

think the Persons proper Judges, let you know my Sentiments of your Sermon, and give you the Satisfaction you desire.

If Resentment of Calumny, and a Demand of Satisfaction for a wounded Character, be Unmannerly, You will always find ill Manners in me, when calumniated, and defam'd.

You may think, I suppose, that I have not treated You with respect enough to Your Superiour Station. To This I answer, that Preferment, in my Opinion, makes a Man neither the more, nor less, valuable; that I am a Priest of the Church of England, as well as You; that I have taken 2 Degrees in the University, which, I do not say, You have not done; and that if you value your self upon having much Preferment, perhaps I may value my self more upon being able to get none.

I never knew any good Churchman offended, or made uneasy by Sermons against Dissenters. I have known Some brought to keep constantly to Church by such Sermons; and I believe almost every Body may know Many gone from Church to Conventicle for want of such Sermons.

Your Spirit, I doubt not, is as easily to be discern'd by Your Writing as Mine. I confess, I think a Spirit of Zeal highly becoming a Professor of the Gospel: You may please your self with a Spirit of Moderation. But thus much I have often observ'd, viz, a more turbulent, and wicked Zeal lurking under a Cloake of Moderation, than ever I saw elsewhere. I have also Observ'd the same Persons loving to Dissenters only of One Denomination, and hot and furious to those of Another.

As for Your Pity, I think, I stand in no need of it. For your Prayer I thank you, and shall make use of the same for Your Self.

May 4 1727.

JOS. SLADE.

Some

Some Observations on the foregoing Letters.

1. *Mr. F. begins an Epistolary Correspondence.*
In his last Letter says, I will not be drawn into an Epistolary Correspondence with you.
2. *Mr. F. in his first Letter says, It would have been more agreeable to your Character and mine to have Written or Spoke to me, than by your Censures on it (his Sermon) to have been the Occasion of so much Discourse about the Town; especially since You had so good an Opportunity after the Lecture when so many of the Clergy were together.*
In his Second Letter, when call'd before the Clergy, he says, I have no Opinion of the Benefit of such verbal Conferences.
3. *Mr. F. in his first Letter says, I am ready to produce it (his Sermon) before any Number of Persons to be chosen by you and me. And I call upon you to make out your Objections against it.*
In his second, declines producing it before the Clergy, that heard it, the most proper Judges.
4. *Mr. F. in his first Letter charges Mr. S. with Censuring, yea, liberally throwing about Censures of his Sermon before the Laity.*
When this Charge is deny'd by Mr. S. and Mr. F. is press'd to produce Evidence, he does not so much as say he has any.
5. *Mr. F. in his first Letter says, No Consideration, no, not even a Supposition of my having advanc'd unsound Doctrine can justify Your proceedings*
Quære, Whether This be not unsound Doctrine: Or whether, in case Mr. F. had preach'd downright Arianism, Mr. S. might not have justly censur'd that Doctrine before the Laity
6. *Mr. F. in his last Letter says, Whatever Method I take, you shall not hear of of my Preaching against you.*
This Resolution inconsistent with his Duty in case Mr. S. preaches Heresy, or any thing repugnant to the Doctrine of the Gospel.
7. *Mr. F. in his last Letter charges Mr. S. with ill Manners.*
Quære, whether ill Manners consist in giving, or resenting, an Affront.
8. *Mr. F. in his last Letter purposes not to preach against Dissenters.*
This Purpose evidently inconsistent with the Duty of a Preacher.
9. *Mr. F. begins the Epistolary Correspondence.*
Mr. F. drops the Epistolary Correspondence.

Whether, in case Mr. S. had censur'd Mr. F's. Sermon before the Laity, he had not justly censur'd it, will appear from the following Sermon.

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Matt. 23, 23.

Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye pay Tithe of Mint, and Anise, and Cummin, and have omitted the Weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith; These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the Other undone.



Comment upon these Words being highly expedient in this place, that I may give as full, and clear an Explanation of 'em as possibly I can, I shall do these 5 Things.

- I. Shew, Who the Scribes and Pharisees were;
- II. Wherein their Hypocrisy did consist, They being in the Text term'd Hypocrites;
- III. What we are to understand by their paying Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin;
- IV. What by their Omitting the Weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment Mercy, and Faith; And
- V. What by the Wo denounc'd against them for their Hypocrisy;

And, First, who the Scribes and Pharisees were. The Word Scribe denotes not a *Señ* amongst the Jews, but an Office: It signifies a Writer, or Scrivener: Of These there were two sorts, *Laicks*, and *Ecclesiasticks*. The *Laick Scribes* were such as had been brought up in the Schools of the Prophets, but had not obtain'd the Spirit, and Mission of Prophets: Their Office was to instruct Children in the Law, and, especially, to teach them to Write: Of These Some were taken into Publick Offices, Some by the King, and therefore term'd *Γραμματεῖς Βασιλέως*, the King's Scribes, or *Secretaries*, as we find it, 2 Kings. 12. 10. Others by Courts of Judicature, and therefore term'd *Γραμματεῖς τῶ λαῶ*, Scribes of the People, Matt. 2. 4. resembling our Clerks of Assize: or, as Dr. Hammond will have it, so call'd, because elected into the Sanhedrim, and to made Judges of their great High Court.

The Scribes Ecclesiastick were Those, whose Office it was to Write, Read and Expound the Law of Moses publickly to the People: Hence were they call'd *Γραμματεῖς τῶ νόμου*, Scribes of the Law, as Ezra. 7. 12. *Νομικοὶ*, Expounders

Expounders of the Law, Luke 7 30. and Νομοδιδάσκαλοι, Doctors of the Law Luke 5. 17. They had the chief Authority in Matters Ecclesiastick, and are therefore said by our Saviour to sit in Moses's Seat, that is, as Moses's Successors, and therefore as Spiritual Pastors, and Governors; for which reason He adds, All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe, and do. Matt. 23. 3.

The Word *Pharisee* denotes a *Sect*, not an *Office*: It is deriv'd from an *Hebrew Word*, which signifies to *Divide*, or *Separate*, from whence they were call'd by the *Greeks*, *Ἀρραϊσμοί*, and may very well be term'd by us *Separatists*. *St. Paul*, who was One of them, calls them *Ἀρραϊσμοὶ τῆς Αἰρέσεως*, the *Strictest Sect*. *Acts. 26. 5.* We find indeed, that they were a very prevailing *Sect*, in great repute, Many of the Chief of the Nation, Those that had the Honour of Sitting in the Highest, as well as in Inferiour Courts of Judicature, being *Pharisees*. These *Pharisees* were, Many of 'em, *Scribes*; and therefore the 2 different Names of *Scribes* and *Pharisees* do not always imply different, but often the same Persons. They differ'd from other Jews in Habit, in Doctrine, and in Practice, but more especially, as the Word *Pharisee* imports, in a *Separation* of Themselves from all others, so far as to have no *Dealing*, or *Commerce*, with even Those of their own Nation, the *Jews Themselves*, that they judg'd to be Sinners; and not to eat with, no not so much as to touch, one of another Nation, which they judg'd to be a kind of Pollution, which requir'd a singular Washing, or Purification of themselves. Indeed they despis'd All Others as ignorant, wretched, and sinful, and pretended to extraordinary Purity, and Holiness, tho', at the same time, they were the greatest of Sinners; which brings me,

Secondly, to shew wherein their *Hypocrisy* did consist, they being in the Text term'd *Hypocrites*. The Word *ὑποκρίτης* in the Greek, from whence comes our Word *Hypocrite*, properly signifies an *Actor*, or *Stage-Player*; any one that *acts*, or *personates* another Man. Now from this Primary signification of the Word you will easily perceive, what *Hypocrisy* in Religion is: It is no more than *Acting* a Religious Man: It is all Trick and Deceit, Disguise and Lie: 'Tis Shadow without Substance, or Appearance without Reality: 'Tis like a Picture, that has all the Outward Form, the Features and Lineaments of a Man, but has nothing of Life, nothing of a real Man in it. Of such Hypocrisy were the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* guilty in a very high degree. They put on the Garb and Dress of Religion;

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They appear'd devout and pious, just and charitable, and yet were far otherwise; They would pray *with their Lips to God*, when *their Hearts were far from him*. and they would do it, *Standing in the Synagogues, and Corners of the Streets*, and would also make *long Prayers*, that hereby establishing a Character of being Religious towards God, they might, without being suspected as Uncharitable, and Unmerciful towards their Neighbour, *grind the Faces of the Poor*, and *devour Widdows houses*, that is, oppress and rob the Neccessitous, and cheat and ruin Widdows and Orphans, the very Worst Oppression and Robbery they could be guilty of. They profess'd a mighty Reverence for their Law; upon which account they wore *their Philacteries* broader, and *the Borders of their Garments* larger; than all others; They were also very Nice in their Observance of their Law, paying a just regard even to the minutest Parts of it, and pretending Scruples of Conscience about the smallest Matters; and yet notwithstanding all this, when any thing was to be got by it, they would set Tradition above the Law, and *strain at a Gnat*, that they might the better *swallow a Camel*, that is, pretend Checks of Conscience about doing the least Evils, that without Loss of Reputation they might commit the greatest. They *fast ed twice in the Week*; and, when they did so, *disfigur'd their Faces*, to signify their inward Mortification and Repentance, and yet, at the same time, were neither sorry for what they had done, nor resolv'd to forsake their former Wicked Courses. They *built the Tombs of the Prophets*, and *garnish'd the Sepulchres of the Righteous*, and condemn'd their *Fathers for killing them*; by which they would be thought to reverence the Memories of the Prophets, and to abominate their Fathers Cruelties; and yet, at the same time, were as bloodily dispos'd, and as ready to exercise the same Cruelties on our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles* after Him, as their Fathers had done on the *Prophets* before Him. They also, when they appear'd in Publick, *did Alms*, that is, were Kind and Charitable to Those that were in Want; but This they did for no other end than *to be seen of Men*, that is, to be applauded, and reputed charitable, and merciful, when, at the same time, they were full of Covetousness, Deceit and Fraud. This then is enough to let you see, wherein the *Hypocrisy* of the *Scribes and Pharisees* did consist. They had only a *Form*, not the *Power* of Godness; They were outwardly Religious, and inwardly the Reverse of it; which reason our Saviour elegantly compar'd them to *Whited Sepulchres*, beautiful

beautiful without, but foul within: They had none of those Divine and Heavenly Graces, which adorn the Soul of an Upright, sincerely Religious Man; Their Worship and Obedience was not *in Spirit and in Truth*; Their Love to God and Man was no more than Pretence; it was all Lie, and Deceit. Self-Love was their prevailing Principle, and the Praise of Men, and Wordly Advancement, the main Ends of all their good Actions.

Having thus shewn Who the *Scribes and Pharisees* were, and Wherein their *Hypocrisy* did consist, I now proceed to the next part of the Text, and to make good what was propos'd,

Thirdly, to be done, which was to shew, what we are to Understand by their paying *Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*. *Mint, Anise, and Cummin* being Herbs of little Value, the Tithe of 'em must be a Matter of such little Significancy, as was next to Nothing at all. But notwithstanding this, as God had given to the *Levites* a Tenth of all the Fruits of the Earth, as you may see, *Lev. 27. 30. and Numb. 18. 21.* Yea, as Tithes had been paid *before* the Law, by *Abraham* to *Melchisedec, King of Salem, and Priest of the most high God*, as we find, *Gen. 14. 20. and Heb. 7. 1. 2. 4.* (From whence, by the by, we may observe, that Tithes were then paid, either by vertue of some *explicite Law* of God, handed down from the beginning, or else by the *Dictates of Nature*, it being reasonable, that They, who serve at the Altar, shou'd live by the Altar, without either Labour, or Merchandize; from whence also we may argue for the Children of *Abraham's* paying Tithes now under the Gospel of *Christ*, who is a *Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec*) I say, as God had expressly given a Tenth part of all the Fruits of the Earth to the *Levites*, and Tithes were paid *even before* the Law, These small Tithes were the *Levites Due*, and therefore ought to have been paid; And therefore our Saviour, lest they might mistake his Meaning, and think, that the *Wo*, denounc'd against them, was upon account of their paying these small Tithes, adds, that tho these Tithes were a small Matter, much less than some other things, which they omitted, yet they ought to be paid; These, that is, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, *ought ye to have done, and not to leave the Other*, that is, these small Tithes, *undone*, that is, unpaid. Indeed as these small Tithes were the *Levites Due*, the Payment of 'em was a Matter of Justice, yea, and, where a *Levite* was poor, and had but a

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very small Subsistence, of Mercy too. But then you will say, if Paiment of these small Tithes were a Matter of Justice, and, it might be, of Mercy too, how came our Saviour to make it of *less weight* than Justice and Mercy, as he does in the Text? In answer to This, it may be said, *First*, that the Difference may lie not in the *Nature*, but *Degree* of these Duties. The Scribes, and Pharisees were just, and Merciful, in Matters of the *least*, but unjust and unmerciful in Those of the *greatest* moment: Or else, *Secondly*, supposing paiment of Tithes to be a Matter of *Positive* Duty only, we may place the Difference in the *Nature* of these Duties. The Justice, and Mercy, which they *did* in paying Tithes, was *Positive*; but the Justice, and Mercy, which they *omitted*, might be *Natural* Justice and Mercy; such as They were oblig'd to by a Precept of Nature, as well as Revelation: Or, *Thirdly*, the Justice and Mercy, which They *omitted* might be *Publick* Justice and Mercy, such as They ought to have done, as Persons of a Publick Character, appointed for that very end, *Publick* Justice and Mercy being of Much greater moment than *Private*, or such as the *paying Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*: Or Lastly, the Justice and Mercy *omitted* may signifie That Justice, and Mercy, which ought to have been practic'd towards our Saviour himself, but was not; and therefore was a Matter of much greater moment, than the Justice and Mercy of *paying Tithes of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*. Having thus consider'd the small Matter in the Text, which the Scribes and Pharisees *perform'd* the *paying Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*, I come now,

Fourthly, To shew, what we are to understand by the *Weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, which they *omitted*.

By *Law* here we are to understand the Law of *Moses*: *Weightier Matters* of the Law may signify, *First*, and chiefly, *Duties more necessary*, as to practice; and, *Secondly*, *more excellent* in their own Nature: For want of this Distinction Errors will arise, and we must talke obscurely. Under *Weightier Matters*, in the *First*, and *Chief* signification, will fall in some Duties, that are meerly *Positive*; and, in the *Second*, Those, that are *Natural*, or *Moral*.

By *Omitting* these weightier Matters we are to understand a frequent neglect of these Duties, and not only such a Neglect, but sometimes a practice diametrically Opposite to 'em, implying Acts of Injustice, Unmercifulness, and Infidelity.

As to the Instances of Weightier Matters, *Judgment, Mercy* and *Faith* I think, they ought to be interpreted in Congruity with the other Parts of the Text. Now as *Wo* in the Text has been generally thought to signify the Punishments, that would be inflicted on the Jews, and more particularly the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, for their Infidelity, and other Behaviour towards our blessed Saviour, so That, for which these Punishments were to be inflicted, the *Omitting Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, ought I think, to be interpreted with Relation, chiefly, to our *Saviour* too. And therefore *omitting Judgment, Mercy, and Faith* may principally signify both a Neglect of these Duties, and also their Opposites, viz. *Injustice, Unmercifulness*, and *Infidelity* towards Him; Injustice and Unmercifulness in violently opposing, and persecuting, and at last Crucifying Him, who was an innocent Person, their very Saviour and Redeemer; and Infidelity in not believing in Him, who was their *God*, of Whom *Moses* and the *Prophets* did write, who was *not come to destroy, but to fulfill their Law*; and who had given Sufficient Testimony of his Divine Mission, of his being *He that was to come, the seed of the Woman, that was to bruise the Serpents head*, in whom *all the Familys of the Earth shou'd be blessed*. But as This Interpretation, tho' it appears, to Me at least, just and reasonable, is somewhat New, and out of the way, I Submit it to better Judgments, and shall walk in the common track with relation to the 2 first Duties Omitted, *Judgment* and *Mercy*, that is, I will take *Judgment* to signify a rendering to all men their Duës, both in a Private and Publick Capacity, that is, as Private Persons in their own private Affairs, and as Officers, and Judges appointed to do right between other Men; I will also take *Mercy* to signify Acts of Kindness, and Charity, to Those that are in want.

But then to make *Faith* signify *Fidelity* only, or *Faithfulness in Making and Performing Agreements, and Contracts*, and such like, as Some would have it, is what I can in no wise agree to. If *Faith* signifies no more than This, it is compriz'd in *Judgment*, and so is Tautology. *Faith* indeed is sometimes in Scripture taken in This Sense, at *Tit. 2. 10*. Where the Apostle, giving Rules for the Behaviour of Christian Servants, mentions *Faith*, we translate it *Fidelity*, *Shewing all good Fidelity*, which is certainly the meaning of the Word $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$, *Faith* in that place. So the Word $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ is often used, as particularly *Luke 19. 17. Thou has been faithful in a very little*. But that *Faith* should be audaciously struck out of our

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Text, and Fidelity inserted in its place, without any other reason given than because *Some* do so *interpret* it. (*) is not a little surprizing: It could be done, surely, upon no other account than This, viz, because *Faith*, in the most common Acceptation of the Word in the New Testament, wou'd not comport with the Doctrines advanc'd from the Text: For if it shou'd be interpreted *Faith* in *Jesus Christ*, as Mediator between God and Man, and Redeemer of Mankind, it wou'd contradict, and quite overthrow the Doctrine, that moral Duties are the *weightier*, and Positive the *less weighty* Matters of the Gospel, unless this Faith be made a Moral Duty, such as our Reason wou'd teach us without Revelation. But being not afraid of Consequences, as this Writer seems to have been, I will not, for the sake of advancing Morality, depress *Christianity*: nor will I say, that I look upon his *Fidelity* as any other than an Unfaithful Interpretation of Faith. That our Saviour meant by *Faith* in the Text not *Fidelity* between Man and Man, but (a) *Faith* in God, yea *Faith* in Himself, and his Doctrine, is natural to suppose, when he was arguing against Unbelievers, and reproving their Sins; and when also we farther consider, that to gain Belief in Himself, and His Doctrine, was the great business of His Con-

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verse

(*) See Title Page, and Page 12. of Mr. Fox's Affize-Sermon on the Text.

(a) St. Jerom upon the Text says thus. Ex hoc Capitulo arguit eos Avaritiæ, quod Studiose villam Olerum decimas exigant, et iudicium in Disceptatione Negotiorum, Misericordiamque Pauperes, et Pupillos et Viduas, et Fidem in Deo, quæ magna sunt, præmittant.

St. Chrysost. thus. In iudiciis autem erant Injusti, in fratribus sine Misericordiâ, in veritate increduli.

St. Ambr. upon the Parallel Text in St. Luke thus. Sed ne rursus fidei Nos studiosos faciat operum negligentes, perfectionem fidei viri brevi Sermone concludit ut et Fide et Operibus approbatur; dicens, et hæc oportuit facere, et illa non omittere. In which words He makes Faith principally intended even in that Text.

Lut. Brugensis upon the Text thus. Fidem in Deum. Fide, utpote radice, significantur etiam Spes, et Charitas, quibus tribus comprehenditur quicquid Lex a nobis exigit ad colendum Deum. Hæc autem, securè præmitterebant, ac contemnebant, Scribæ et Pharisei, fidem quidem exempli gratiâ, cum pertinaciter rejicerent Christum a Deo Patre missum. Nam non credit in filium Dei, nec credit in Deum: immo mendacem facit eum, quia non credit testimonium, quod testificatus est Deus de filio suo.

Arcius thus. Fides, scilicet, de his, quæ Deo debemus, quid de Deo credendum sit, aut non credendum. Fides complectitur primam tabulam, Ex. ②. Secundam, ut prius dixit Christus, in his duobus Mandatis pendere Legem et Prophetas.

Grotius thus. Ut Matthæi sentis, et cum Propheta (Mic. 6. 8.) et cum Luca rectius dicat, arbitror visum hic non esse eam, quæ inter homines Spectatur, fidem, sed spem ac fiduciam collocatam in misericordiâ Divinâ, quæ humilem dilectionem, et Studium Obellicitiæ nobis excitat.

See Hammond, Whisby, cum Multis Aliis.

verse with Men. But besides Probability, we have, I think, almost Certainty on our Side for the Explanation of *Faith*; which, that any one, who has collated, and duely consider'd *Parallel Texts*, should be ignorant of, is very Strange: It is from 2 *Parallel Texts*. The Former is *Matt. 23. 23.* *He hath shew'd thee? O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walke humbly with thy God:* This Scripture, no doubt, our Saviour had respect to in the words of the Text: The Latter is *Luke 11. 42.* The words have very little variation from Those of the Text, and are a Relation without doubt of the very same Speech of our Saviour, and therefore are a sure ground of Interpretation. For if Both Texts are a relation of One and the Same Speech, they must necessarily have One and the Same Meaning: The words are these, *But wo unto you Pharisees, for ye tithe Mint and Rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over Judgement, and the Love of God: These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone:* In the Former of these Texts you may observe *Walking humbly with God*, and in the Latter *the Love of God*, to stand in the place of *Faith* in our Text: If then they are to be interpreted in agreement with each other, *Faith* must signify the same as *Walking humbly with God*, and *the Love of God*. Now, surely, *Walking humbly with God*, and *the Love of God*, were never interpreted Fidelity between Man and Man in Contracts, and Promises. No, *walking humbly with God*, *the Love of God*, and *Faith*, explain each other, and do Each of 'em signify our whole Duty to God, all the Dutys of the first Table, and more particularly *Faith in God*; and not only *God the Father*, but *God the Son* too, that *Faith* mention'd by St Paul, *Gal. 3. 6.* *which worketh by Love*; And therefore I think we may rightly paraphrase our Text with that of St Luke, after this manner, *Wo unto you Scribes, and Pharisees for tho' ye pretend to be so just, pious, and religious, as not to neglect even the Minuteest parts of the Law, paying Tithe even of Mint, Anise, and Cummin, and all manner of herbs; yet all your Religion is no more then Hypocrisy: for ye are deficient in matters of much greater moment, and more necessary to be done, even in Matters of Justice, and Mercy, and, more especially, of Faith in Me, notwithstanding I have now given sufficient Evidence, that I am your God, your Mediator. and Redeemer.* We may also observe a beautiful Gradation in the 3 Duties, *Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, Judgment, less than Mercy, or Mercy greater then Judgment, and Faith the greatest

of all; the 2 Former implying All the Duties of the *Second Table*, and the Latter Those of the First.

Before I dismiss this Head, it is necessary to enquire, what were, and are, the *least Weighty*, the *Weightier*, and the *most Weighty* Matters of the Law to *Jews*, and *Christians*.

We have been told, that (*) *among the Jews the Precepts respecting the Ceremonies, and Sacrifices appointed in the Law of Moses, the Precept of the Sabbath, and in general all the Instrumental Duties of Religion, may be Stiled the less Weighty Matters of the Law.* That the Ceremonial, or Ritual part of the Mosaical Law was of less Excellency in Nature then Moral Precepts, I suppose, None will deny. But I wou'd gladly know, what this Writer meant by *less Weighty*, and *Weightier*; whether by *less Weighty* he meant Matters of the *least moment*, as his Text should incline him to, *Weightier* being there set in Opposition to *least weighty*, to *Tithing of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*; and whether, by *Weightier*, Matters of the *greatest moment*. (Thus far he ought to have explain'd himself to have prevented Mistakes in his Audience, and Readers, that they might not take some Duties to be Duties of *least moment*, which really are *not so*. That he, designedly, omitted this, in order to the depreciating some Christian Duties, most highly necessary to be practic'd, far be it from me to imagine, tho' he has given in the following part of his Discourse by far too much grounds for such an Imagination.) If he meant, by *less weighty*, Matters of the *least moment*, or *least Necessary*, he is very wrong in his Instances of *Sacrifices*, and the *Sabbath*. *Sacrifices* were ordain'd for Expiation of Sin, and, by vertue of that great Sacrifice of which they were Types, did expiate Sin, as you will find, *Lev. 4. 20. 26. 31. 35.* surely then to expiate Sin was not a Matter of the *least moment*: And as to the *Sabbath*, the very first part of the Precept is *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day*; and surely too the *keeping holy the Sabbath-day* is not a Matter of the *least moment*. Besides, the Precept of the *Sabbath* has, I presume, something of *Morality* in it, and therefore, is an Instance the more extraordinary. It is also One of those Ten Commandments, which God thought fit to engrave on two Tables

(*) Mr. Fox's Sermon P. 6. 7.

Tables of Stone, and therefore, to be sure, a Commandment of the *greatest* moment.

If it be said, that the *resting from Labour*, and the *Time of Rest*, were the only things intended by the *Precept of the Sabbath*. I answer, that the *Precept of the Sabbath* includes more then These; that the chief part of that *Precept* is *keeping holy the Sabbath-day*; that if a part of it only was intended, it should have been so express'd, and not the *Whole* depreciated for the sake of a *Part* of it.

But how is it prov'd, that *Sacrifices and Sabbaths*, were the *less weighty* Matters of the Law? Why the Argument is as extraordinary in it's kind, as the Instances themselves: It is This: *There may be Reasons, which will justify a Person before God and Man for omitting* (by which I suppose he means deferring for a time) *to offer Sacrifice, or for doing some servile and laborious Work on the Sabbath-day* (by which I suppose he means such work as the *Precept of the Sabbath* could not reasonably be extended to) *but no Reason can be assign'd* (he does not say for omitting, or deferring for a time, Acts of Justice and Mercy, which, to make his Argument good, he ought to have said; but) *which will justify or excuse a Person for Oppression, or for being unjust, cruel, or Unmerciful.* Here you may plainly see the Terms of the Argument alter'd, and the sense of the Words in the latter part different from that in the former. The Argument therefore is false, and therefore concludes nothing.

I have only farther to observe upon this Argument, that if the Arguer meant, by *Servile and laborious Work*, directly prohibited by the *Precept of the Sabbath*, he did wisely in giving no Instance of it, or shewing wherein we might break God's Commandment, and be guiltless.

As to the *Instrumental Duties of Religion*, (by which, I suppose, we are to understand *all the Means of Grace*;) These, and all Other Duties, as far as they are Institutions merely Positive, are *inferiour in Nature* to Moral Good; But that they are upon this account *less weighty*, as weighty signifies *necessary to be done*, far be it from me to affirm. I take them to be *equally necessary*. For, if without God's Grace we can neither believe in God, nor do any Action, morally good, that will be acceptable to God, and we cannot have this Grace without the Use of the Means, the Use of the Means must be as Necessary as the End it self. And therefore I think they are not to be rank'd amongst the *less weighty* Matters, and especially, if by *less weighty* we understand the *least weighty*.

Under

Under the Head of *less weighty Matters*, with respect to us Christians, amongst Others we find these Two, *Prayer*, and *the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* (*) and in another Place (†) *the Sacraments*. We are told, (‡) that the *Weightier Matters of the Law* are *Duties of a Moral Nature*, and *perpetual Obligation*; and what Moral Duties are, we are told a few lines after; they are such as *arise from the Consideration of the Reason and Nature of Things, of our selves, and the Relations we are in, and the Attributes and Perfections of God*. Now I wou'd fain know, whether *Prayer* be not a Duty, that arises from the *Consideration of Our selves, and of the Attributes and Perfections of God*? and if so, whether *Prayer* be not a *Moral Duty*, according to this Writer Himself? and if a *Moral Duty* whether it be not one of the *weightier Dutys*? and if one of the *weightier Duties*, how he came to place it amongst the *less weighty* in contradiction to Himself? *Prayer* is certainly a *Natural Duty*, what our own Reason, without Revelation, points out to us, as fit, and necessary: It is One of Those Duties compriz'd in the very first Commandment of the first Table: It is also comprehended in the *Love of God*, which our Saviour calls *the first, and great Commandment*, greater than the *Love of our Neighbour*, which he calls *the Second Commandment*. Matt. 22. 38. 39. And fit it is, no doubt, that Duties to *God* should take place of, and be accounted greater, than Duties to our *Neighbour*. Whoever then makes *Prayer*, One of the chief Duties of the *first Table*, less weighty than *Justice, Mercy, and Fidelity*, Duties only of the *Second Table*, yea puts it even into an *inferiour Class* of Duties, inverts the Order of the Decalogue, that Order in which God has plac'd these Duties, and contradicts what our Saviour says of the *Love of God*, which comprizes *Prayer*, *This is the first and Great*, emphatically *The Great, Commandment*.

As to the *Sacraments*, they consist indeed of *Sprinkling with, or Dipping into Water*, and of *Eating and Drinking Bread and Wine*. But then are These the *Whole* of the *Sacraments*? Are there not *Inward* as well as *Outward Parts* belonging to 'em, which are a *Death unto Sin*, and a *new Birth unto Righteousness*, and an *eating and drinking Christ's Body and B'ood*? And are These Things to be deem'd the *less weighty Matters* of the *Gospel*? How shocking must This be to Christian Ears? If there be

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*no other Name given among Men whereby to be sav'd, but only the Name of Jesus: And if the Sacraments be an Incorporating, and Uniting our selves to this Jesus. and applying the Merits of his Body broken, and Blood shed, to ourselves, are they Matters of less weight to us then Justice and Mercy, and Performance of Contracts and Promises? We may well cry out to the Heavens and Earth to be astonish'd at such Doctrine. Our Redeemer has assur'd us in words too plain to be mistaken, or misunderstood, by any One, that can see a Contradiction, that Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, of Water as well as the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. John 3. 5. and Except we eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, we have no Life in us. John 6. 53. and our Church says in her excellent Catechism, that the Sacraments are generally, that is, where they may be had, necessary to Salvation. If God then has hung Salvation upon the Sacraments, what can be of more weight, or of greater Necessity? If it be said, the Outward Parts will be of no benefit to us without the Inward, no more will giving all our Goods to feed the Poor, and even our Bodies to be burn'd, without an Inward Principle of Love, and Obedience to God, and of Mercy and Compassion to the Indigent. Surely then, when our Author was crying down Positive Duties, and making them less weighty than Moral, it would have been a gross Neglect in him not to have Excepted the 2 Sacraments, and Faith in his Redeemer; but it is something infinitely Worse in him actually to Instance in the Sacraments, as things of less weight then Justice, Mercy, and Fidelity, thereby giving People a very low Opinion of the Sacraments, as being of no more weight then *Tithing of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*. If the great Duties of the Christian Religion be thus handled, we may cease to wonder, if we see Men, not only Living, but Professing themselves too, Infidels, and Apostates:*

If our Author has been induc'd, thro' too great a Veneration for Names, without Argument, to assert what he has asserted, his Lot is now much the harder, he being to prove Their, which he has made his Own, Assertions, by better Arguments than have yet been produc'd. Thus much as to the *less weighty Matters*.

Under

Under our Author's Head of *Weightier* Matters we find the Duties of the 1 and 2 Table jumbled together, and no Precedence of the 1 given to Those of the 2, which ought to have been done.

You will say then, what are the *most Weighty*, the *Weightier* and the *least Weighty* Matters of the Law? Or in what Order are the Duties of Religion to be plac'd? I answer, in That Order, in which God has plac'd them.

The *most weighty* Duties are Those, which more immediately respect God Himself, the Duties of the 1 Table, as Faith, Love, Fear, Trust, Prayer, and such like, and tous Christians, Belief in our Redeemer, and the 2 Sacraments: The *Weightier*, or the *less Weighty*, are the Duties which respect our *Neighbour*, the Duties of the 2 Table, as Justice, Mercy, and the like, said in the Text to be the *weightier*, but not the *most weighty* Matters, that is, weightier then *paying Tisbe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin*, which was so low an Act of Justice, as was next to None at all.

And Lastly, the *least weighty* Matters I take to be such, as relate to Dress, Gesture, Decency, Order, and such like, Duties, that are neither Means of Grace, nor have any Natural, or Intrinsic Goodness in them.

There now remains only one Thing more to be done, which is to shew, Fifthly, what we are to understand by *Wo* in the Text, *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees*. That This must signifie some thing very dreadful may be collected from the so frequent Repetition of it in the Chapter of the Text, it being there no less then 8 times denounc'd. This *Wo* then may signify the terrible Judgments, that were, speedily, at our Saviour's First Advent, to be inflicted on them for their Injustice, Unmercifulness, and Infidelity towards Himself, the Son of God, their Saviour, their Redeemer, the Lord of Glory, as the Destruction of their City, and Temple, and Nation, set forth by Him in a more tremendous manner then any Judgments, that ever came upon any People.

But more especially may it imply those Punishments, which he wou'd execute upon them at his Second Advent; when they shou'd be sentenc'd to everlasting Destruction, for their Hypocrisy, Infidelity, and all the evil they had done; when they shou'd be condemn'd to that place where *shall be Weeping, and Gnashing of Teeth*, Matt. 24. 51. call'd *Outer Darkness*, Matt. 23: 13. *the Fire that never shall be quench'd, and Hell-Fire*. Mar. 9. 45. 47. by all which we are to understand a Place of such ex-

trême Grief, and Horror, and Torment, as is beyond any Resemblance in this Life, as we can have no Idea of, as can neither be express'd, nor conceiv'd. This then may be the *Wo* in the Text, denounc'd by our Saviour against the Scribes and Pharisees for their *Hypocrisy*, and for their *Omission of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*.

Thus have I gone thro' what I propos'd, that is, given as full and clear an Interpretation of the Words of the Text as possibly I could.

From what has been said, I doubt not but you plainly perceive the great Sin, of Hypocrisy; that *Sacrifices and Sabbaths* were not the *least* Matters of the Gospel; that *Faith* is not to be struck out of the Text to make room for *Fidelity*, it being a much higher and more necessary Duty, without which we ought not to pretend to be Christians, nor can we do any Works, that, will be acceptable to God; that *Prayer*, and the 2 *Sacraments*, the One a Moral, the other *Positive* Duties, and therefore very injudiciously plac'd together, are not some of the *less weighty*, but *most necessary* Duties of the Christian life; and that all the *Instrumental Duties*, or *Means of Grace*, are not the *least* Duties of Religion, no more than *Circumstantial Parts* of it, and to be put in the place of *paying Tithes of Mint, Anise and Cummin*; and lastly, that the *Wo* in the Text denounc'd against the Scribes and Pharisees for their Hypocrisy, is very great, and dreadful.

Let us then my Brethren, *beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees* that is, take the greatest heed, that we imitate them not in their Hypocrisy, lest we incur the like *Wo* with them.

To pretend to greater Purity, and Strictness of life than Other men and to abominate Sin of every kind, and yet to be seen daily associating with the greatest of Sinners, what is this but Hypocrisy;

To pretend to be Members, and Lovers too, of our most excellent Establish'd Church, yea, to eat of Her Bread, and daily to be nourish'd with her Food, and yet, at all times, when her Interest is at Stake, to lift up the heel against Her, to confederate with *Edomites* and *Ismaelites* with *Moabites* and *Hagarèns*, with *Gebal*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*, Her inveterate and sworn Enemies, what is this but most detestable Hypocrisy?

To make loud Pretences to Justice, to Universal Justice and Charity, and yet to have no regard to Merit, and to starve all but Those of a Party, what is this but Hypocrisy?

To plead Tenderness of Conscience, against complying with the lawfull Commands

Commands of our Governors, and yet to make no Conscience of doing the Office of Satan, tempting unwary Souls for a few pieces of Silver to sell Themselves, their Religion, and their Country too, what is This but to *Strain at a Gnat and Swallow a Camel?*

To pretend a Reverence for the Ministers of Christ, and yet to be always traducing and vilifying, raising and propagating Scandal of 'em with the utmost Hatred and Malice, that the Devil can inspire, what is This, but, with the Pharisees of Old, *to build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous*, and yet, as far as we are able, to *stone, to kill, and crucify 'em?*

To profess a Belief of God, and His Word, and yet to Scoff at Religion, and be ever burlesquing and Ridiculing the holy Scriptures, what is This, in reality, but to *omit Faith*, and be an *Hypocrite?*

Lastly, To frequent the Place of God's Publick Worship, and yet to be cruel, unmerciful, and unjust to Those that are in want, to rob and ruin Widows and Orphans, what is This but to *grind the faces of the Poor, to devour Widows Houses, and for a Pretence to make long Prayers?*

Let us All then carefully abstain from these, and the like, Practices, keeping an eye to the dreadful *Wo* in the Text, denounc'd against Those, that are guilty of 'em? and tho' we may think it at some distance, yet let us look on it as certain, what will infallibly be executed upon us, if we turn not from these Sins; and let us often reflect on what the Wise Man says, viz. *Lying Lips, and the Sacrifice of the Wicked are an Abomination to the Lord, but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight.*

Lastly, let us pay a due regard to all God's Commandments, carefully performing, in the first place, all the Duties of the first Table, the greatest and most necessary Duties, and particularly Faith, in God, the very Root and Fountain of all good Works, and also in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Foundation of all Christian Vertues, and the very Condition of our Salvation, together with the other Two great and most necessary Duties, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

Let us, in the Second place, be mindful of discharging our whole duty to our Neighbour and Our selves, all the Duties, of the Second Table, as Judgment, Mercy, and the like: And lastly let us not leave undone the Duties of least moment.

By such an Universal Obedience of God's Commandments we shall,
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after the best manner, recommend our selves to his Favour; We shall be most happy here in a full Hope and Expectation of a glorious Recompence, and shall after this life have an entrance usher'd to us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, where we shall be advanc'd to the highest Station of Heavenly Glory, and shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, as the Stars for ever and ever. Amen.

FINIS.

